



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 8, 2022 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall
City of Lowell, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA
Remote Participation Optional via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Thomas Linnehan, Chairman
Gerard Frechette, Vice Chairman
Robert Malavich, Member
Caleb Cheng, Member
Sinead Gallivan, Associate Member

Members Absent

Richard Lockhart, Member

Others Present

Peter Cutrumbes, Assistant Planner

A quorum of the Board was present. Chairman Linnehan called the meeting to order at 6:39 pm.

I. Minutes for Approval

8/15/2022

G. Frechette motioned and C. Cheng seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

II. New Business

Definitive Subdivision Approval — 90 Lupine Road

Cornerstone Land Associates has applied to the Lowell Planning Board for the approval of a definitive subdivision plan that includes the subdivision of the existing parcel into two (2) parcels, one of which does not meet the minimum frontage requirements pursuant to Section 5.1 of the Lowell Zoning Ordinance. The property is located within the Traditional Neighborhood Single Family (TSF) zoning district. This project requires Planning Board approval under Lowell's Subdivision of Land Regulations.

On Behalf:

K. Lania spoke briefly about the project, and mentioned that it had previously received ZBA approval.

Speaking in Favor:

Nathaniel Thompson, of 95 Lupine Road, said that he supports the project. Hooshmand Afshar, the current owner of the property, spoke in support of the project. He believes it will be a substantial improvement to the property.

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

T. Linnehan read an anonymous letter into the record that was in opposition to the project. K. Lania provided two letters in support: one from Robert and Patty Crabtree from 70 Lupine Road and one from Sajada Syed from 75 Lupine Road.

G. Frechette asked what the date of the letters was. K. Lania said May, as they were submitted for the ZBA meeting. G. Frechette expressed concern that, although 4500 square feet is a common lot size in the neighborhood, many homeowners own two or more lots. He also stated that most lots have more frontage.

G. Frechette also stated that the project may need additional approvals, as he questioned if the applicant was granted 15 feet or less lot frontage relief, that is covered under the Planning Board Special permit, why did the applicant go to the Zoning Board of Appeals. K. Lania said he thought he was applying for that as well. G. Frechette noted that if it needs to come before the Planning Board it will need to be reposted. P. Cutrumbes explained that the original plans submitted to the ZBA indicated a frontage of 50 feet, requiring 20 feet of relief. This is why the Zoning Board issued a Variance for frontage. P. Cutrumbes further elaborated that K. Lania submitted plans indicating a frontage of 58.4 feet during the ZBA meeting. However, P. Cutrumbes maintained that the ZBA still issued a valid Variance for frontage, but confirmed he would consult with staff.

S. Gallivan said she is generally supportive, but wanted the ZBA documents and a definitive answer on the Variance.

B. Malavich asked if the lot could just be split in half. K. Lania says the town line prevents this from happening. B. Malavich expressed general support.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned to continue the project to the October 3 meeting, and C. Cheng seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Definitive Subdivision Approval — 32 Pine Hill Street

JMF Realty, LLC has applied to the Lowell Planning Board for the approval of a definitive subdivision plan that would allow the construction of a new single-family home. The newly created lots will not meet the minimum frontage requirements pursuant to Section 5.1 of the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.

The project requires Definitive Subdivision approval from the Lowell Planning Board under Lowell's Subdivision of Land Regulations.

On Behalf:

Brian Akashian, the applicant's counsel, spoke on behalf. He briefly summarized how the project fits the neighborhood, and that his client is amenable to the condition of replacing any removed trees.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

Kenneth and Ann Barnes of 28 Pine Hill Road did not speak explicitly in opposition, but they had a question as to whether the project will affect their ability to build on their lot. B. Akashian and T. Linnehan both said no.

Victoria Richards and Patrick McCarthy from the condo association at 18 Pine Hill Street expressed opposition. They are concerned that the retaining wall on 18 Pine Hill Street can't withstand a foundation being put in. B. Akashian said there is always a risk with construction, but that his client would not want to open himself up to litigation and would take the utmost care because of that.

Discussion:

T. Linnehan asked about adding the window mentioned in the Staff comments. B. Akashian said it is conditioned by the Zoning Board.

G. Frechette inquired about a landscaping plan. B. Akashian said nothing has been submitted yet.

C. Cheng asked if they had submitted their utility plan to the Engineering Department yet. B. Akashian said they will pending approval.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned and C. Cheng seconded the motion to approve the Definitive Subdivision. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Site Plan Review and Special Permit — 1514 Gorham Street

ZR Development, LLC has applied to the Lowell Planning Board to construct six (6) townhouse style residential units on the 32,661 square foot property at 1514 Gorham Street. The subject property is located in the Suburban Mixed- Use (SMU) zoning district. The proposal requires Site Plan Review approval per Section 11.4 to construct more than three (3) residential units, and Special Permit approval per Section 11.3 and Section 12.1 (d).

On Behalf:

John Geary, the applicant's counsel summarized the project briefly.

Project Engineer Mark O'Hare spoke about the stormwater plans. The runoff will be treated and detained. He stressed that the Conservation Commission will decide what erosion controls to use. He said there is snow storage on the plans.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

John Gorrasi of 1524 Gorham Street spoke in opposition. He said a development proposal was denied there a few years ago, and that this project will impact the neighbors such as himself. J. Gorrasi stated that there are concrete bays where central AC infrastructure for his building is located, and it may be disturbed by construction. His wife Kathleen also expressed opposition.

Discussion:

G. Frechette expressed satisfaction that it does not require any Variances. G. Frechette asked about trash removal. J. Geary said it is a private pick up. G. Frechette asked if it could be screened.

C. Cheng expressed confusion about whether there will be a sidewalk behind the building. He said residents may be rolling their trash bins over the lawn according to the Site Plan, but that he noticed a walkway is on the Architectural Plans. S. Gallivan pointed out that the walkway behind the building is only on the Architectural Plans.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned, with B. Malavich seconding, to approve the site plan with the following conditions:

- The applicant shall remove any snow that cannot be stored onsite
- The applicant will submit an updated landscaping plan for DPD approval emphasizing screening for trash bins on the rear of the condominiums
- The applicant will comply with the Engineering comments

The vote was unanimous (5-0).

G. Frechette motioned, with B. Malavich seconding, to approve the Special Permit incorporating the same conditions as above. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

III. Continued Business

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: St. Louis School 72-74 Boisvert Street and 253 W. Sixth Street 01850

On Behalf:

J. Geary summarized the project and updates so far. He mentioned that the project has received ZBA approval with an altered site plan. He mentioned that, by tweaking the dimensions of the parking spaces, they reduced the need of parking relief to 4 spaces. He feels they have been amenable to neighborhood concerns about on-street parking. He mentioned the traffic engineer's comments from the morning of 9/8, particularly that each unit will not actually NEED 2 spaces, as some units will have one or no cars.

Mark O'hare, Project Engineer, spoke briefly. There were not many engineering changes.

Kerry Owen, Northpoint Construction, spoke briefly about the interior floor plan revisions, which are minor. These include additional bike racks and a bulletin board with public transit info.

Speaking in Favor:

Josh McCabe, of 62 Fairmount Street, spoke in favor of the project. He said ⅓ of households in Lowell have 1 or 0 cars, so he does not believe parking to be a major issue.

Speaking in Opposition

Maureen Kelleher, of Unsworth Street, spoke in opposition. She stressed that the 5 parking spaces on the rear of the building facing Beaulieu Street could present problems. The fence at the back of the building would have to come down. She said the width of the angled spaces are not wide enough, and the size of the spaces would require a Special Permit. She says no Special Permit was granted by the ZBA.

Regina Faticanti, of 161 Bunker Hill Avenue, spoke in opposition. She said the proposed plan would cause traffic issues.

Sandy McNamara, of 74 Beaulieu Street, spoke in opposition. She said the developer has been unable to answer the neighborhood's questions. She also said high cost units and density on this scale are not helpful for Centralville.

Discussion:

T. Linnehan spoke on the traffic engineer's comments and read them into the public record. The engineer believes the parking on site will provide adequate parking. The traffic engineer also said the grasscrete spaces are unnecessary.

G. Frechette said the traffic engineer's comments were very helpful, and he has visited the site frequently. He is concerned with parking on Beaulieu Street. However he has seen parking on Boisvert Street at all times. He is against the new proposed parking spaces on Beaulieu Street.

S. Gallivan asked the outcome if PB approves this without 5 spaces on Beaulieu. J. Geary answered they would ask ZBA for minor modification. She agrees with G. Frechette about the 5 spaces on Beaulieu Street. She stressed that the traffic engineer said those spaces are unnecessary. S Gallivan asked how the building can be done with 19 units where none are accessible. K. Owen said accessibility requirements don't kick in until 20 units.

C. Cheng expressed concern over the size of the spaces. He also agreed with his colleagues regarding the 5 spaces.

B. Malavich concurred.

J. Geary said the applicant would be willing to revert the site plan back to the original (removing the 5 new spaces).

M. Kelleher stressed the necessity of a Special Permit. She said this is just the start and that the developer would be purchasing all the parcels of land. She claimed the ZBA told them to talk to the archdiocese for the parking lot across the street.

S. McNamara asked why it would be considered a minor modification. T. Linnehan explained the process.

C. Cheng asked if they could condition administrative review. J. Geary said they'd be amenable.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned, with C. Cheng seconding, to approve the Site Plan with the following conditions:

- The applicant will remove the five parking spaces in the rear of the building facing Beaulieu Street
- The applicant will submit a final landscaping plan for DPD approval
- The applicant shall incorporate the distribution of LRTA schedules for residents upon move-in into the project's Transportation Demand Management plan.
- After 6 months of full occupancy, an administrative review of the TDM plan and the effectiveness of the parking layout will be evaluated, and the applicant will act on any suggested mitigation.

The vote was unanimous (5-0)

G. Frechette motioned to approve the Special Permit, with C. Cheng seconding, upon the inclusion of the above conditions, as well as the ZBA landscaping conditions. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

III. Other Business

IV. Notices

V. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

S. Gallivan mentioned that applications for the CPC are due September 15. T. Linnehan acknowledged C. McCall's departure and wished her luck.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by G. Frechette, seconded by S. Galligan. The vote was unanimous (5-0). The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 PM.